

# THE BIG MUDDY

## The River of the Lewis and Clark expedition-Part 2

### BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

## AMERICAN INDIANS IN MISSOURI



Our states very name is derived from one of the American Indian tribes that lived here. The *Missouri* Indians were located near the confluence of the Missouri and Mississippi Rivers. The tribe's name for the Missouri River was "Nishose," which translated means "Muddy". Several other tribes of American Indians also called the lands of Missouri home. The Osage, Delaware, Kickapoo, Shawnee and Cherokee once lived here, and the Sauk and Fox tribes, located to the north also made frequent raids into the lands of Missouri. European settlement would eventually force the native peoples out of the Missouri region, relocating the tribes to reservations in Kansas and Oklahoma. By this time many of the tribes had been decimated by diseases such as small pox and represented a mere fraction of their previous populations.

Prior to European influence, the Osage tribes maintained a strong presence in Missouri, extending south to Arkansas. The Osage lived a semi-nomadic lifestyle, living off the land, hunting buffalo, deer and moving when game became scarce. Relationships between the various Indian nations were often tense and bloody. Raids by the Sauk and Fox tribes living in the north often forced tribes to relocate or join together for protection. The Missouri tribe eventually resettled to the area of present day Kansas City as a result of such tribal warfare.

By the 1500s the Europeans began to arrive in the Americas. In 1541 the Spanish conquistador Herdando De Soto marched up the Mississippi from the Gulf of Mexico stopping just before reaching the Missouri River. The French discovered the Missouri River region during an expedition by Louis Joliet and Father Jacques Marquette in 1692. The French established a presence in the Missouri River region with a principle interest in the burgeoning fur trade. Spain was interested in the region as well and both of these European nations often competed for the favor of American Indian Tribes. Each often joined forces with various tribes in an effort to drive the other Europeans out. Eventually, the French gained predominant control over the area and established fur trade routes along parts of the lower Missouri River.



## ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION PROGRAM

In the 1750s hostilities broke out between the French and British, leading to the *French and Indian Wars*. The British forces defeated the French along with their Indian allies and the war ended in 1763 with the signing of the Peace of Paris Treaty. A significant result of this treaty was the transfer of the province of Louisiana (the lands west of the Mississippi River to the Rocky Mountains) by France to Spain. This was done in reparation for war damages incurred by Spain, but, more importantly, it was also a move by the French to keep these territories out of the control of the British. Napoleon later forced the Spanish to return these lands to France and then in an effort to raise cash for his military efforts in Europe, sold the entire Louisiana territory to the United States in 1803 for a sum of \$15 million. This purchase more than doubled the size of the United.

The excitement generated by the Lewis and Clark expedition combined with the fact that the territory was now part of the United States brought in a wave of immigrants to the Missouri River region. The American Indians living in Missouri were most often viewed as being in the way of progress. Under pressure by the United States, the Osage Indians signed a treaty in 1808, giving up almost all their lands in southern Missouri for \$1,200 in cash and \$1,500 in merchandise. The Osage then relocated to reservation lands near Kansas. From these reservations the Osage still made hunting trips into the Missouri region, alarming the newly arriving settlers. In response, a state militia was formed, forcing the Osage back across the state line and containing them to their reservation lands.

The Delaware and Shawnee tribes had been moved to Missouri in the late 1700s from Ohio and had been given land near present day Cape Girardeau. However, in 1825 they were pressured to exchange their land for a reservation in eastern Kansas in exchange for \$1,400 in moving expenses and \$11,000 owed to local white traders. In the early 1800s the Kickapoo tribe, who had been forced out of Illinois and Indiana, resettled in what is now the city of Springfield. By 1882 the Kickapoo were also pressured to give up their lands in southwest Missouri and move to reservation lands in Kansas.

The governmental policy regarding the American Indians is reflected by President Thomas Jefferson's instructions to Lewis concerning the Corps of Discovery expedition:

"And, considering the interest which every national has in extending & strengthening the authority of reason & justice among the people around them, it will be useful to acquire what knowledge you can of the state of morality, religion, & information among them [Native Americans]; as it may better enable those who endeavor to civilize & instruct them, to adapt their measure to the existing nations & practices of those on whom they are to operate"



The legacy of American Indian presence in Missouri can still be observed all around us. Burial and fortification mounds are common throughout the state. Other artifacts such as stone tools and implements provide important clues to the American Indians that lived in Missouri\*. During their expedition, Lewis and Clark commented on rock paintings they observed along the river bluffs. Some of these paintings can still be seen today. Many rivers and locations in Missouri take their name from terms used by the American Indians who once lived here.



***\* Please Note: Private collecting of artifacts often ruins their archaeological value and is a violation of the American Antiquities Act.***

**FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:**

***THE PREHISTORY OF MISSOURI***

Michael J. O'Brien and W. Raymond Wood

***FINDING MISSOURI- Our History and Heritage***

Missouri Department of Elementary Education,  
Missouri Department of Natural Resources,  
State Historical Society of Missouri.

***INDIANS IN MISSOURI***

History Department Web site from Southwest  
Missouri State University  
[http://history.smsu.edu/FTMiller/LocalHistory/  
Essays/moindians.htm](http://history.smsu.edu/FTMiller/LocalHistory/Essays/moindians.htm)

***HISTORY OF THE STATE OF KANSAS-  
Indian History***

William G. Cutler

***FORT OSAGE***

National Historic Landmark  
[www.historicfortosage.com](http://www.historicfortosage.com)

***MISSOURI DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL  
RESOURCES Division of State Parks (see  
included insert for materials)***

